



PERFORMANCE SUPPORT TOOLS

12 Examples On How Job Aids Can Support Your Corporate Training

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About the author

Asha Pandey is the Chief Learning Strategist at EI Design. She heads the organization's Solution Architecting and Innovation teams and brings her rich 15 years' experience into play to help EI Design customers transform their learning and keep pace with the changing dynamics in the learning industry. A regular writer for various Global Learning forums, Asha is one of the most recognized thought leaders in the industry. She also shares her insights regularly on a range of topics on her blog at www.eidesign.net/blog.

About EI Design

EI Design is a leading **Learning and Performance Support solutions provider** that thrives on **transforming learning** – keeping it alive, relevant, impactful, and continuous.

- ✓ A thought leader in **innovation**, EI Design keeps enhancing its solutions to create the right **learner engagement** and spark **behavioral change**.
- ✓ For the third time in a row (2015, 2016, and 2017), EI Design ranked as **#2** in the eLearning Industry's list of **Top 10 e-Learning Content Development Companies**.

EI Design specializes in transforming learning for our customers and learners with approaches that:

- Provide “sticky” learning
- Provide predictive learnability or learning effectiveness
- Offer “just-in-time” learning (Performance Support Tools) to push knowledge from acquisition to application on the job
- **Create high impact learning experiences and a positive ROI**





Preface

According to the 70:20:10 Model for Learning and Development, we learn:

- 70 percent from on job experiences (experiential learning).
- 20 percent from interactions with others (social learning).
- 10 percent from formal training (structured learning).

While the exact ratio of how we learn may be debatable, what is evident is that the L&D teams need to go beyond the focus on 10% of formal training and must align their learning strategies to encompass the need for informal learning.

Performance Support Tools (also referred to as learning or job aids) can be used to supplement formal training and address this need. You can integrate them into your learning strategy and see the “**performance changing**” gains accrue. This eBook shows you exactly how you can achieve this mandate.

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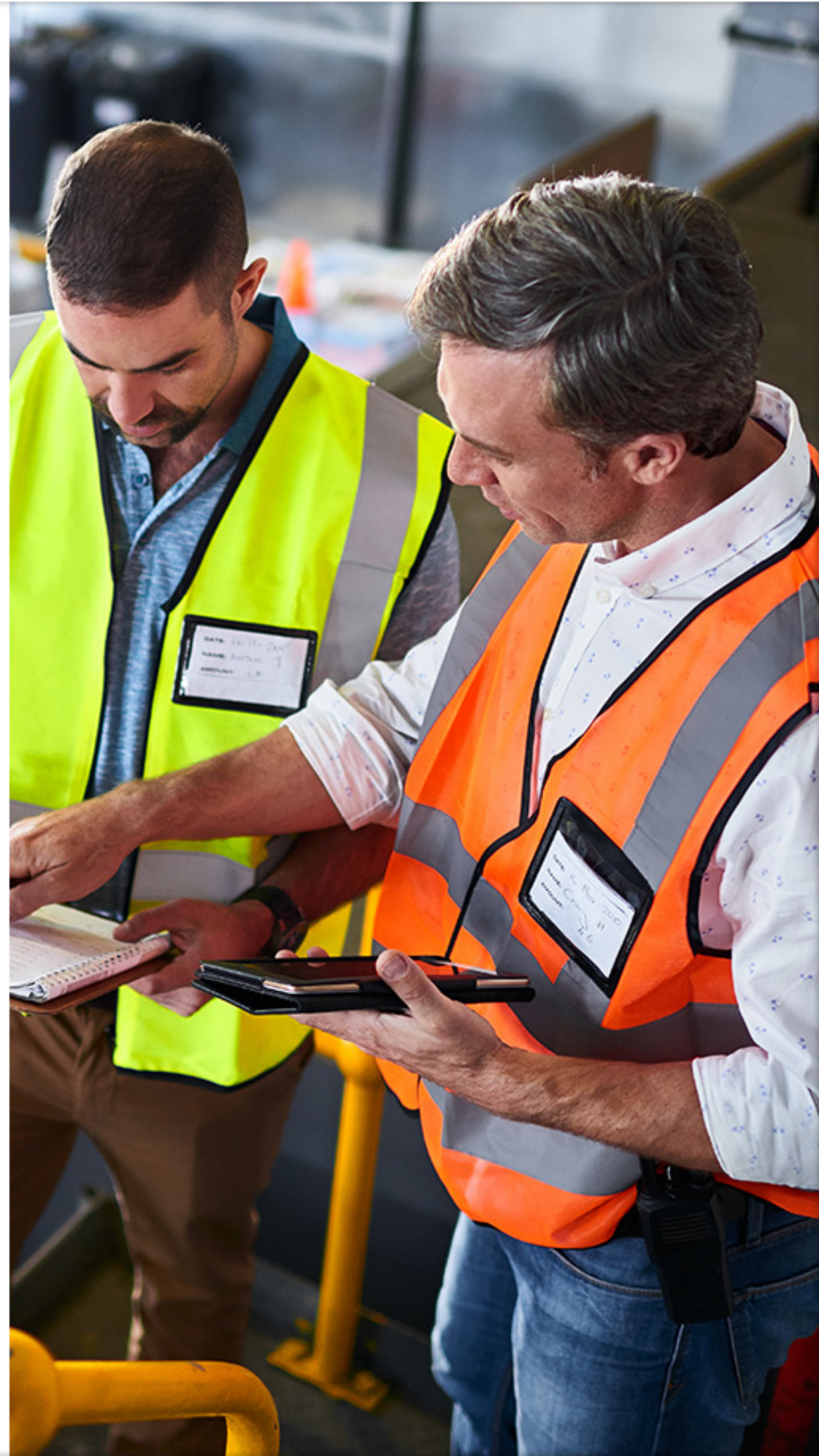
What are Performance Support Tools (PSTs)?

In simple terms, Performance Support Tools or PSTs are job aids designed to provide learners with on-the-job support just when they need it.

Conrad Gottfredson and Bob Mosher's **Five Distinct Moments of Need®** very succinctly captures when exactly learners seek learning. According to them, learners seek support in these Five Moments of Need:

1. When they are learning an aspect for the first time (**New**).
2. When they want to deep-dive and learn more (**More**).
3. When they want to apply or remember something (**Apply**).
4. When they need to solve a problem or fix something that has gone wrong (**Solve**).
5. When something changes (**Change**).

While formal training does address the first two learning needs, the use of Performance Support Tools is particularly relevant in meeting the subsequent three needs.



What are Performance Support Tools (PSTs)?

An effective Performance Support intervention can increase the application of learning. This has a direct impact on improving ROI in eLearning. Some of the typical characteristics of PSTs are:

1. They are meant to provide support and guidance to employees when at work.
2. They address a specific challenge.
3. They can be easily accessed by employees and are usually embedded directly into their workflow.



What are Performance Support Tools (PSTs)?

Performance Support is not a new concept. It started surfacing nearly three decades ago.

As **Gloria Gery**, a key proponent of Performance Support points out,

“

Performance Support focuses on work itself while training focuses on the learning required to do the work. Integrating resources in the workplace is inevitable, and the need is urgent. Filtering resources so people get the tools and resources they need while actively working is the goal. Work process and roles are the primary filters. The mechanisms vary: portals, performance-centered workflow interfaces, enterprise applications, integration projects, etc, but what's important is that performer be able to name that tune in one note, to perform in exemplary fashion.

”

While the concept is over thirty years old, it is finding its spot under the sun now. With increased focus on ROI by the L&D teams and businesses-seeking clear and demonstrable gains, the usage of PSTs is finally gaining momentum.

How are PSTs different from training?

PSTs complement formal training. While the knowledge gain to acquire this skill would happen through formal training, PSTs are provided to learners as just-in-time aids to facilitate application of the acquired skill. They are highly definitive in nature typically designed to address a specific challenge or problem.

Let me showcase how this would work practically:



Typical approach

Assume that an employee needs to do a task that he is not fully familiar with (for instance, his tasks needs to be done now with an application released recently). He is likely to ask a colleague or his manager or he may review online help of the software tool. Or, he may go back to the supporting training material. You can imagine the time involved in this path.

PST-based approach

On the other hand, the required information can be converted to a Microlearning nugget of a few minutes run length (as a ready reckoner that addresses typical user queries). In this approach, the user now has the access to the information exactly when he needs it (within his work-flow, on his smartphone) and in a format that enables him to get an immediate resolution of his query.





How are PSTs different from training?

The word you would associate with the training is “**instruct**” whereas the word you would associate with Performance Support is “**perform**”. When it comes to training, it’s just learning that’s happening and work takes a break (or is postponed) whereas with Performance Support, it’s learn and work at the same time.

We can also look at the differences between training and Performance Support in the following ways:

- Learners take a training to learn a new concept or skill or obtain more knowledge about that concept or skill whereas Performance Support has more to do with application of that concept or skill and problem-solving.
- Learners usually require training when there is an identified gap of skills or knowledge that needs to be bridged or when something needs to be explained about a concept in detail. When it comes to Performance Support, learners need it on-the-job to make troubleshooting a snap and fix problems instantly.
- Learners will be taking a fixed time off to take a formal training whereas with Performance Support, it’s more about getting access to the job aid whenever they need it while at work and there is no fixed time as such to go through a PST.
- The goal of a formal training is to help learners acquire knowledge and new skills whereas PSTs are meant to help learners complete their tasks at hand.
- With training, the learning is structured whereas learning happens incidentally with PSTs.

Do PSTs replace formal training?

As we have noted, PSTs are different from training.

However, it is important to note that PSTs are not a replacement for formal training. They complement formal training and can be used to make formal trainings more interesting and meaningful by helping the learners to not just acquire knowledge but apply it on the job.

Speaking about knowledge acquisition and its application, it is a known fact that there is a significant gap between the two and the business gains come about when there is a substantial impact created by the latter.

It is here that PSTs serve as a boon for the L&D professionals in terms of helping the learners apply the learning on the job and demonstrating a positive impact on the business.

Why should you use PSTs?

For learners, especially of the current generation, learning and working simultaneously is a key aspect. In addition, they like learning and working informally.

PSTs are a great tool to boost the employee performance as they:

- ✓ Help learners learn and perform tasks independently, without them having to seek external help.
- ✓ Help avoid wastage of time in terms of senior employees guiding lesser experienced employees.
- ✓ Equip employees to complete their tasks in a shorter time and with the desired quality even if they don't get access to formal training.
- ✓ Simplify tasks for employees and help them understand complex tasks easily.
- ✓ Familiarize learners to new systems or updates in their workflow/process.



Can PSTs impact the bottom line?

As I had highlighted earlier, PSTs are easily available and usually embedded directly into the learners' workflow helping organizations provide the required task support and step up the productivity quotient of their employees. They are typically designed to address a specific challenge.

On account of this, some of the gains that PSTs provide are:

1. Increase in productivity.
2. Increase in quality.
3. Decrease in errors.
4. Improved turn-around time for a task.
5. Better service (on account of quicker resolution).

All of these have a direct impact on your bottom line.



How do Performance Support Tools help learners and boost workforce performance?

Learners like learning at work and learning informally. PSTs allow the learners to learn and work at the same time.

They are extremely beneficial in terms of enhancing employee performance as they:

- ✓ Enable learners to perform tasks on their own without depending on external assistance.
- ✓ Save time that would otherwise have been wasted in the form of senior employees providing guidance to lesser experienced employees.
- ✓ Enable new employees to perform tasks quickly with the required quality, irrespective of a formal training being available or not.
- ✓ Help new employees understand complex tasks in a simple way.
- ✓ Help learners learn about new systems, upgrades, or a new introduction in the workflow/process.

How can organizations use Performance Support Tools to boost workforce performance?

PSTs accelerate learning as they are part of the learners' workflow and are available precisely at the time of their need. By design, they are easy to assimilate and easy to apply.

Specifically:

1. They are a great fit for informal learning.
2. They can be also be used to support formal training to improve the stickiness of learning and its eventual application on the job.
3. You can integrate Microlearning-based strategies to create them and see the application levels zoom.
4. Couple them with platforms for Social Learning and you will see the impact of your training multiply.



What gains will organizations accrue if they adopt Performance Support Tools?

Today, with wider adoption of mLearning or mobile learning, organizations have an enormous range of options to provide Performance Support solutions to their employees and boost workforce performance.

- ✓ Adding Performance Support to your formal training will not only enhance the impact of the formal training but more significantly enable learners to apply the learning on the job.
- ✓ Having access to these learning aids precisely at the time of learner need encourages the learners to use them effectively. The final outcome is “performance changing” learning that the L&D teams seek.
- ✓ Additionally, technology allows us to offer Performance Support within the learners’ workflow (for instance, on their smartphones) and in varied engaging formats that appeal to different learner profiles and create sticky learning.

How can PSTs be used?

PSTs can be used in various ways.

Specifically:

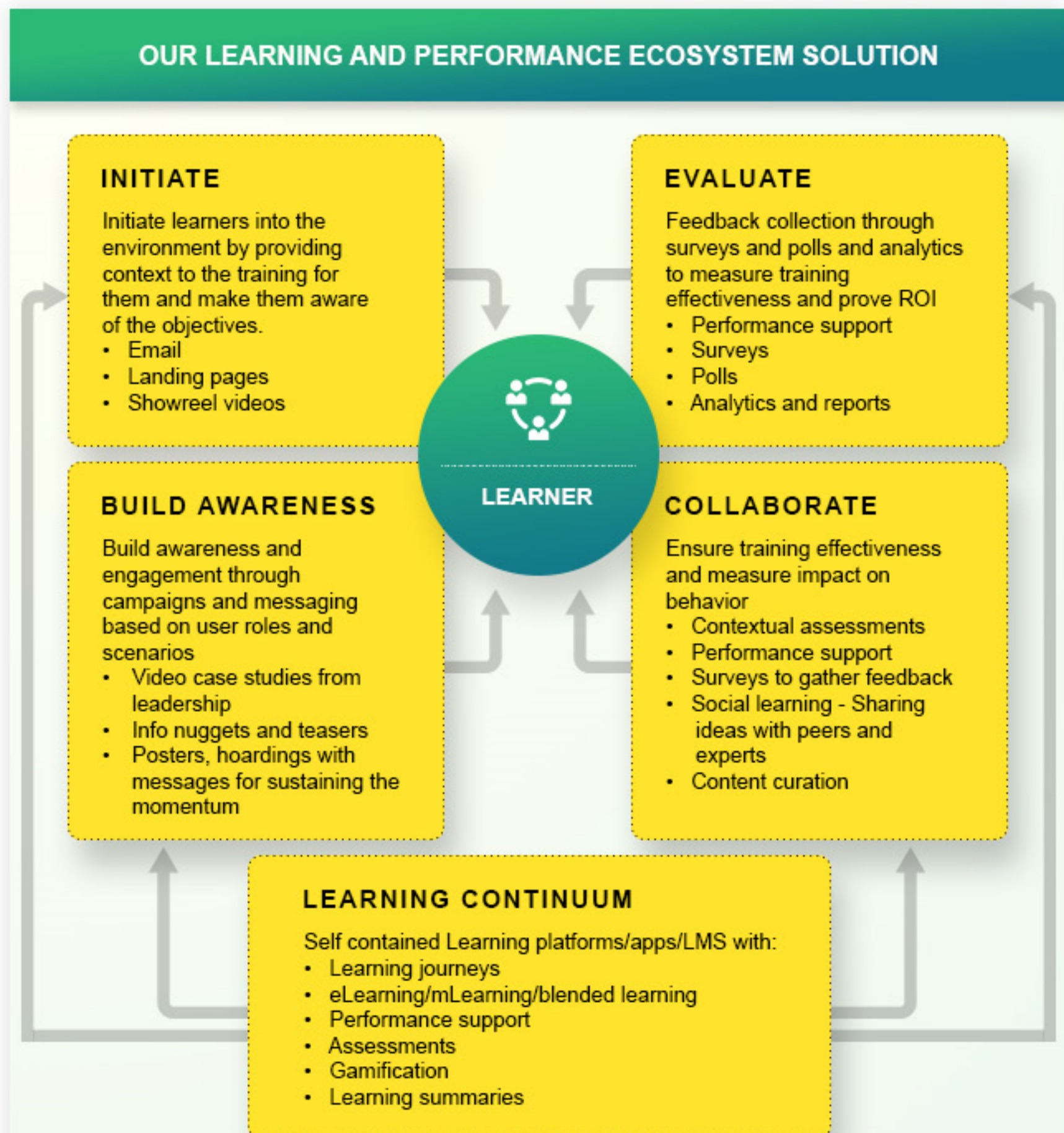
1. They serve the purpose of **informal learning** really well.
2. They can be used to **complement formal training** and bring about greater application of that learning on the job.
3. They can be used to offer **instant learning** by making them available in the learners' work-flow, ensuring that they get access to them just when they need.
4. They are **multi-device compatible** and can be offered in **mLearning or mobile learning** formats helping learners access them on the device of their choice.
5. They gel well with the concept of **Microlearning** and when done so, the impact can be higher.
6. They also have ample scope for integration of other innovative approaches such as **Gamification, Social Learning, Story-based learning (Storytorials), Scenario-based learning, Guided exploration**, and so on.





How can Performance Support be integrated into your overall learning strategy?

The answer lies in having an approach of **Learning and Performance Ecosystem** as shown here that integrates components of all three aspects of how we learn.





What are the formats that can be used to design PSTs?

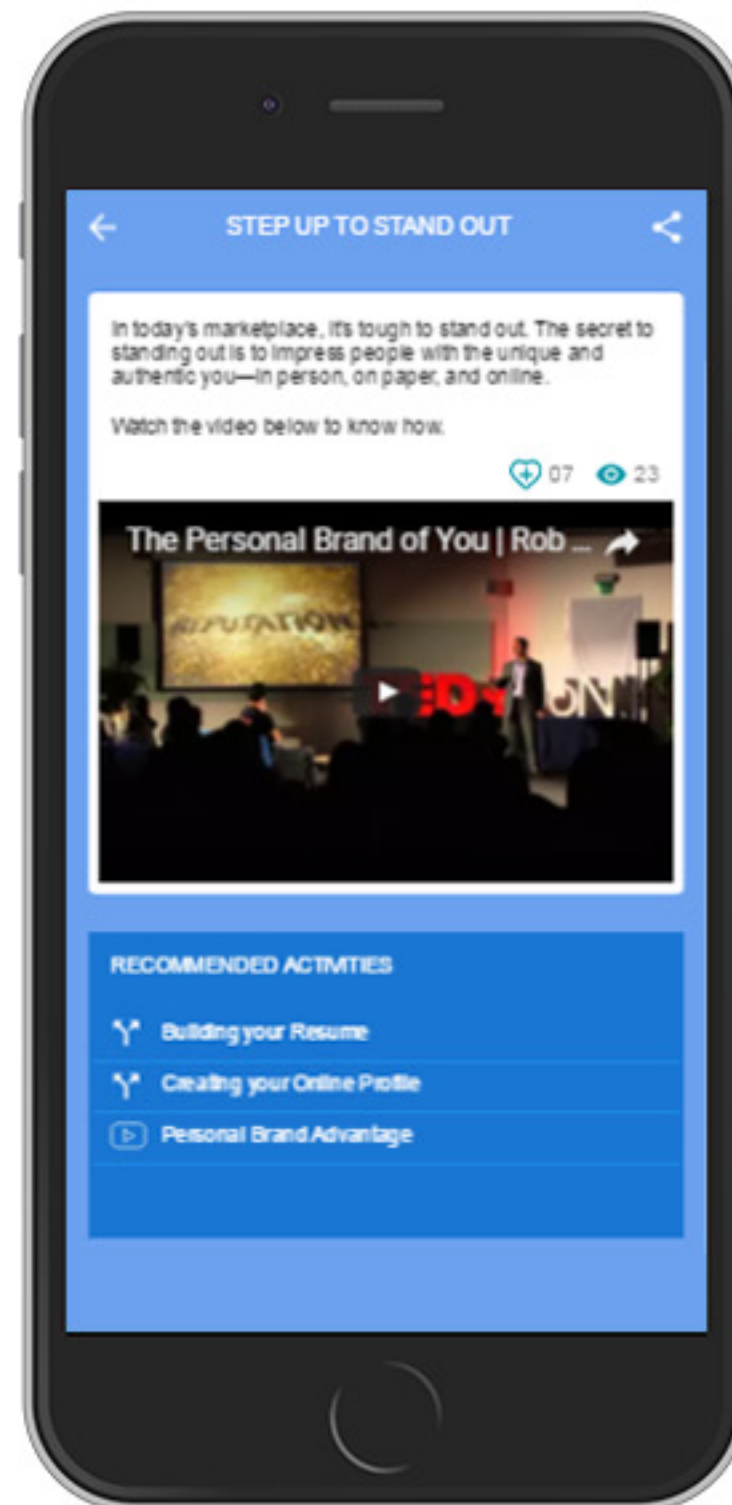
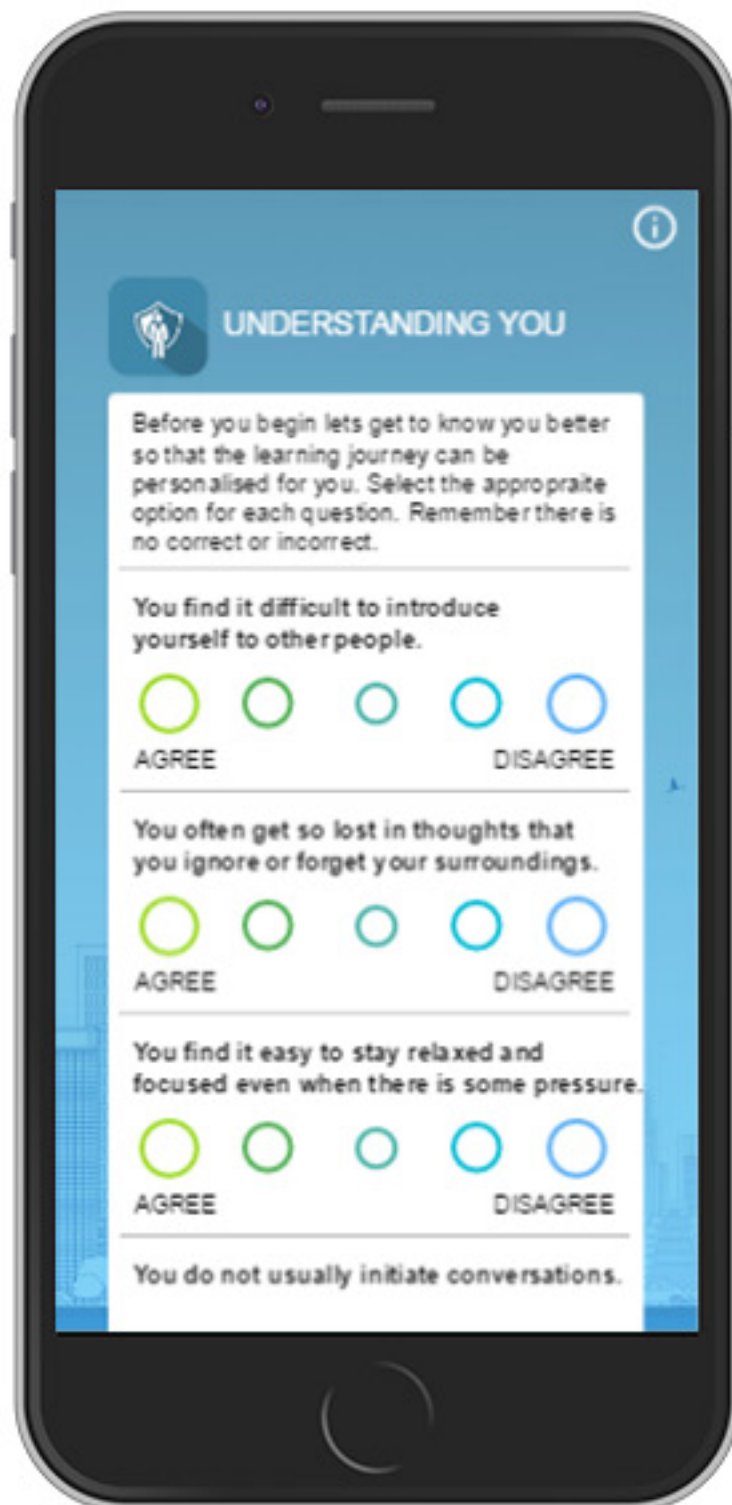
You can offer Performance Support Solutions to improve employee performance in a variety of ways.

I pick 12 examples in different formats to show you exactly how you can use PSTs to support formal training or provide an effective channel to promote informal learning.

At EI Design, we offer Performance Support Tools to increase workforce performance in various formats, including:

1. Mobile Apps

The very fact that these apps are “mobile” helps learners obtain just-in-time information and Performance Support anytime, anywhere.



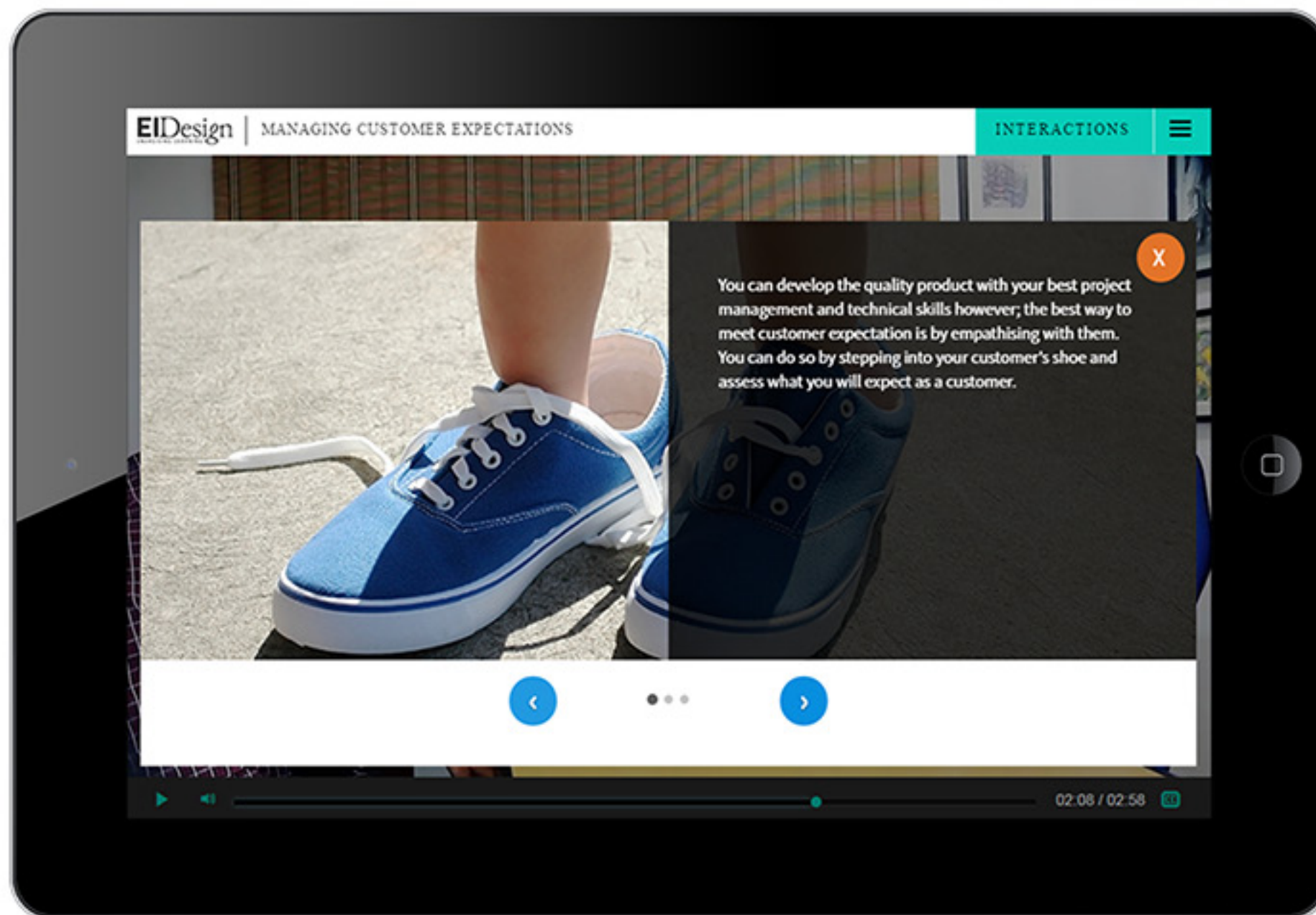
2. Videos

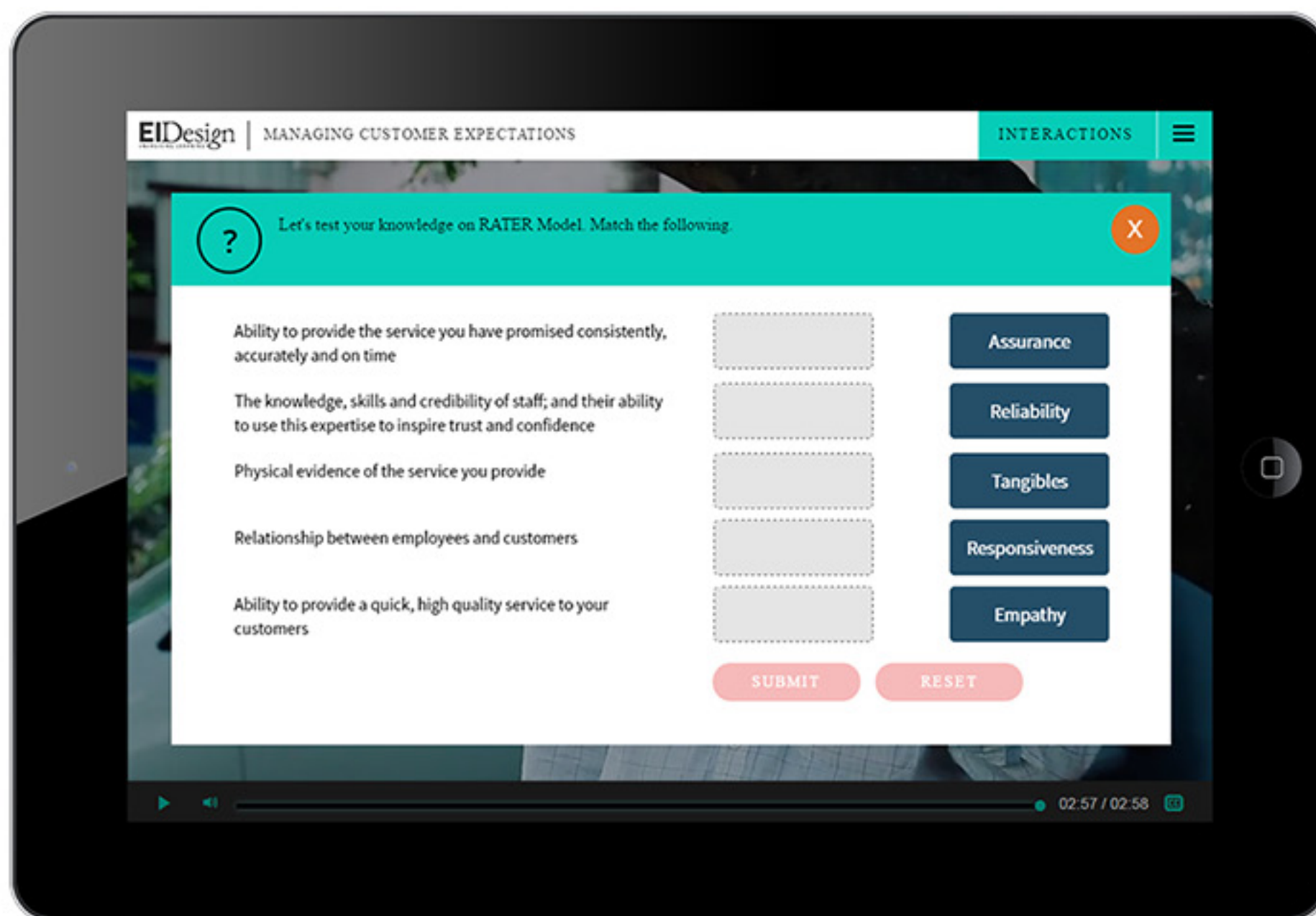
They have proved to be one of the most sought-after Performance Support Tools and the fact that “How-to” searches shoot up 70% every year on YouTube justifies it. You can pick from a range of interesting animated video formats that are easy to develop and create high impact.



3. Interactive videos

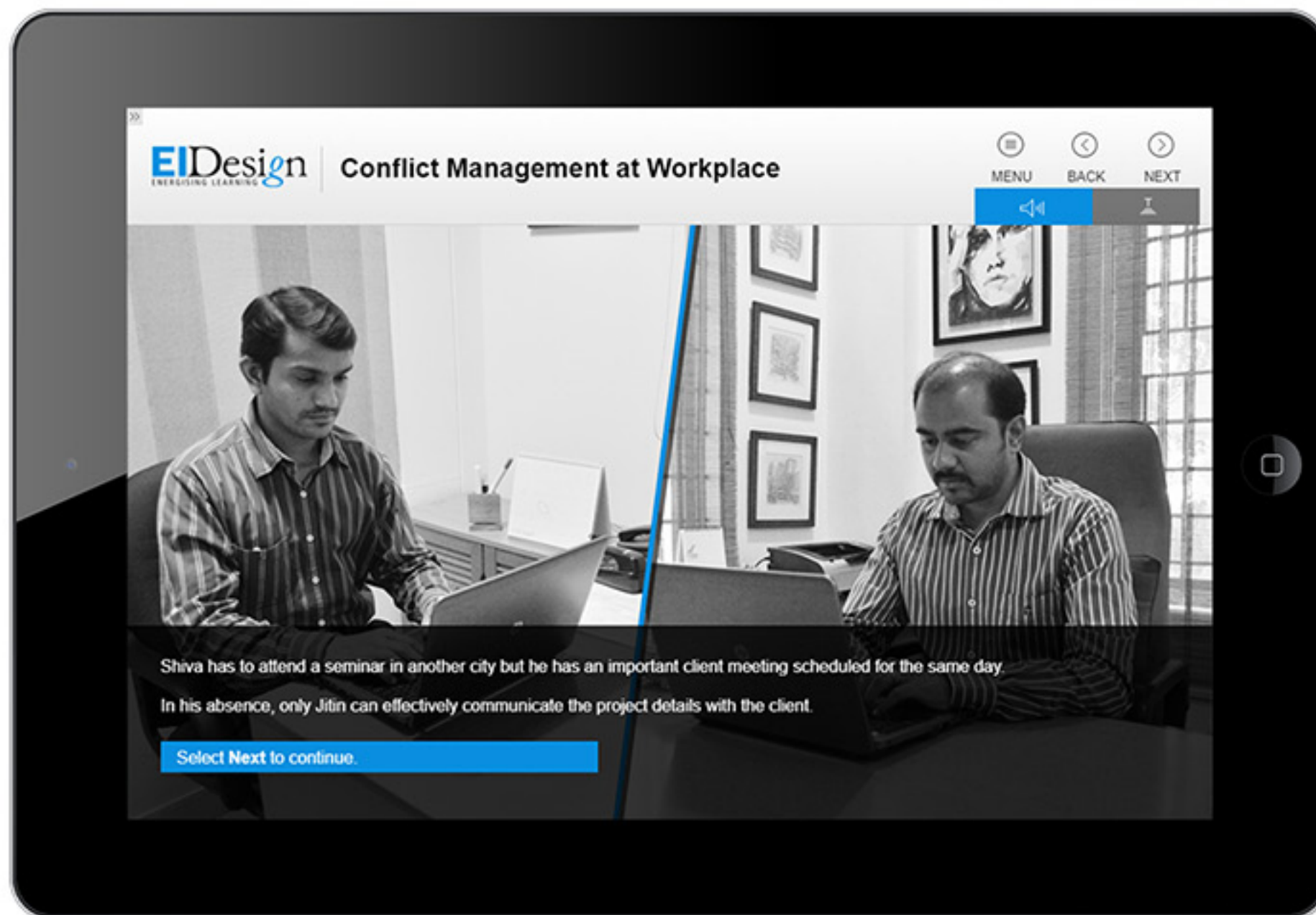
While the impact of video-based training is immense, they are tough to use when you have longer run lengths. The challenge of passivity can become a show stopper. You can flip this by opting for Interactive video-based learning that provides a range of user interactions (including assessments and branching based on the learner's response).

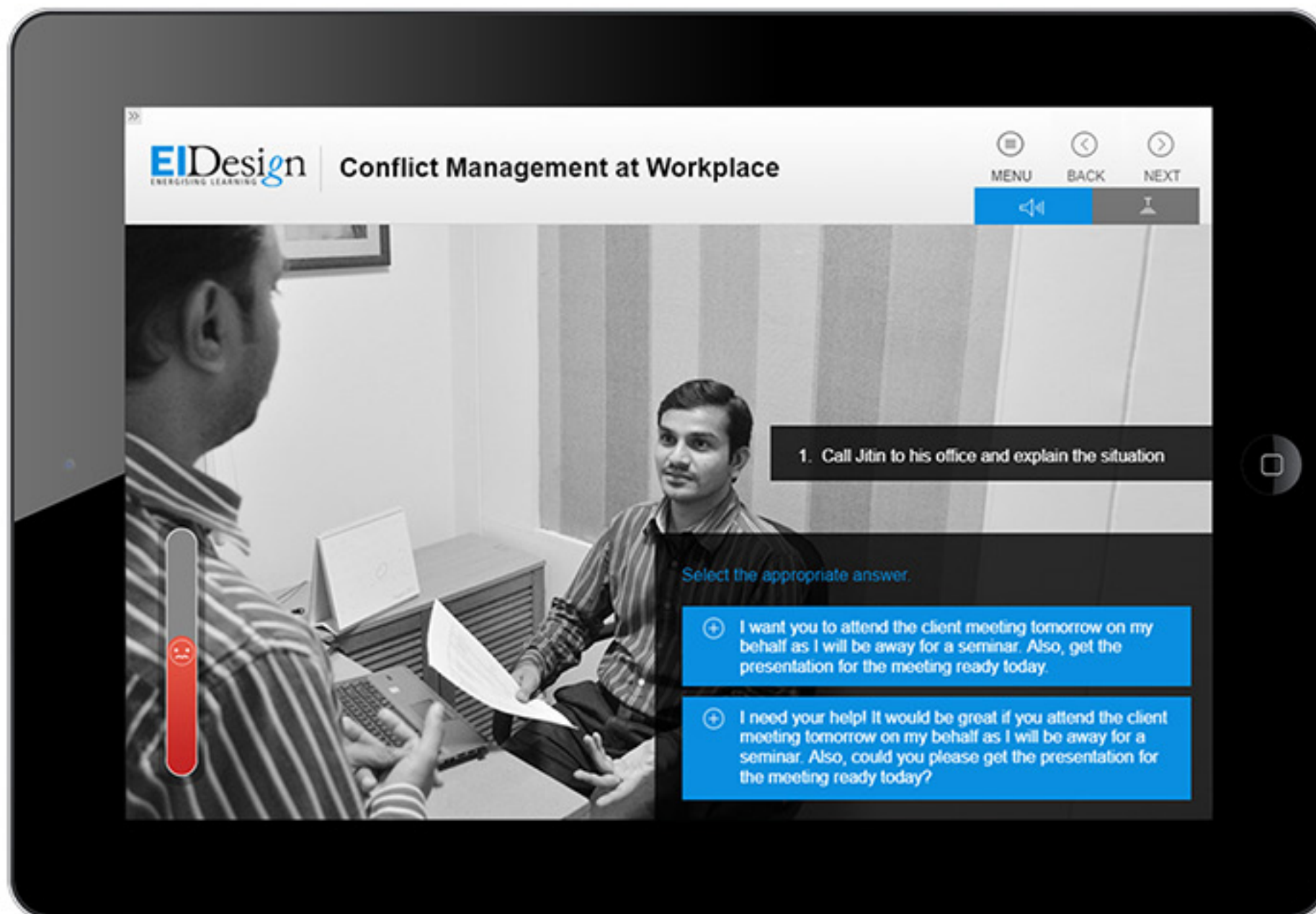




4. Decision-making scenarios

More often than not, learners will be in need of just-in-time support when they are stuck in a complex situation at work. You can offer Performance Support in the form of decision-making scenarios to help them and achieve higher retention of learning and application of that learning on the job.





5. Whiteboard animations

Animations and illustrations are one of those things that catch your eye instantly. When packaged as a Performance Support Tool, they not just capture learners' attention but retain it and help them internalize the learning effectively.



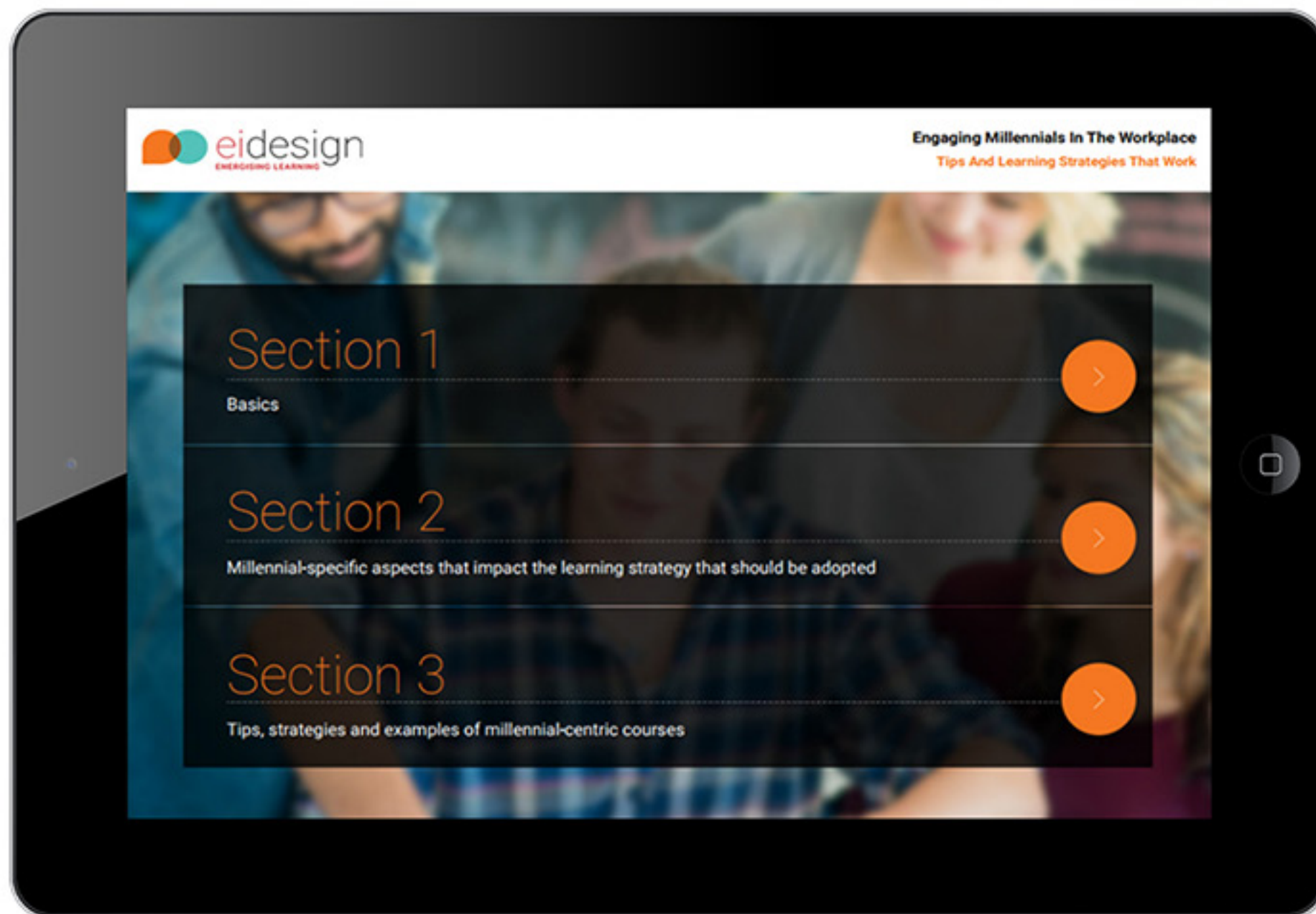
6. Kinetic Text/Animations

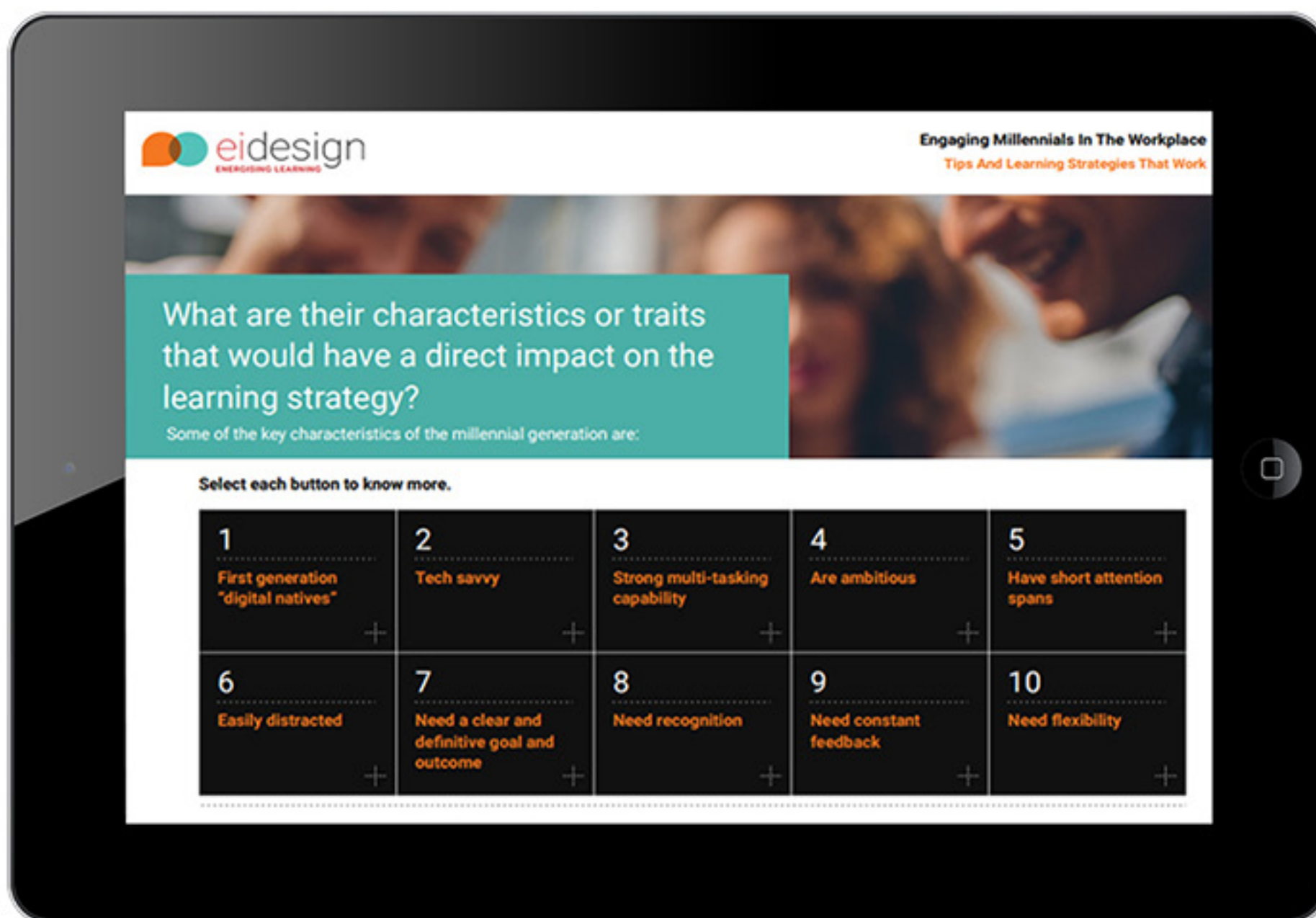
They're extremely handy when you want to convey concepts that are difficult to visualize. Highly suited for summarizing work-flows, procedures, check-lists, they are amongst the most effective PST formats you can pick from.



7. Interactive PDFs

Save the learners the travails of going through lengthy documents. You can offer them Performance Support in the form of Interactive PDFs with a touch of user-friendly navigation and appealing visuals. They make great PSTs when used to present tips, checklists, fact sheets, and so on.

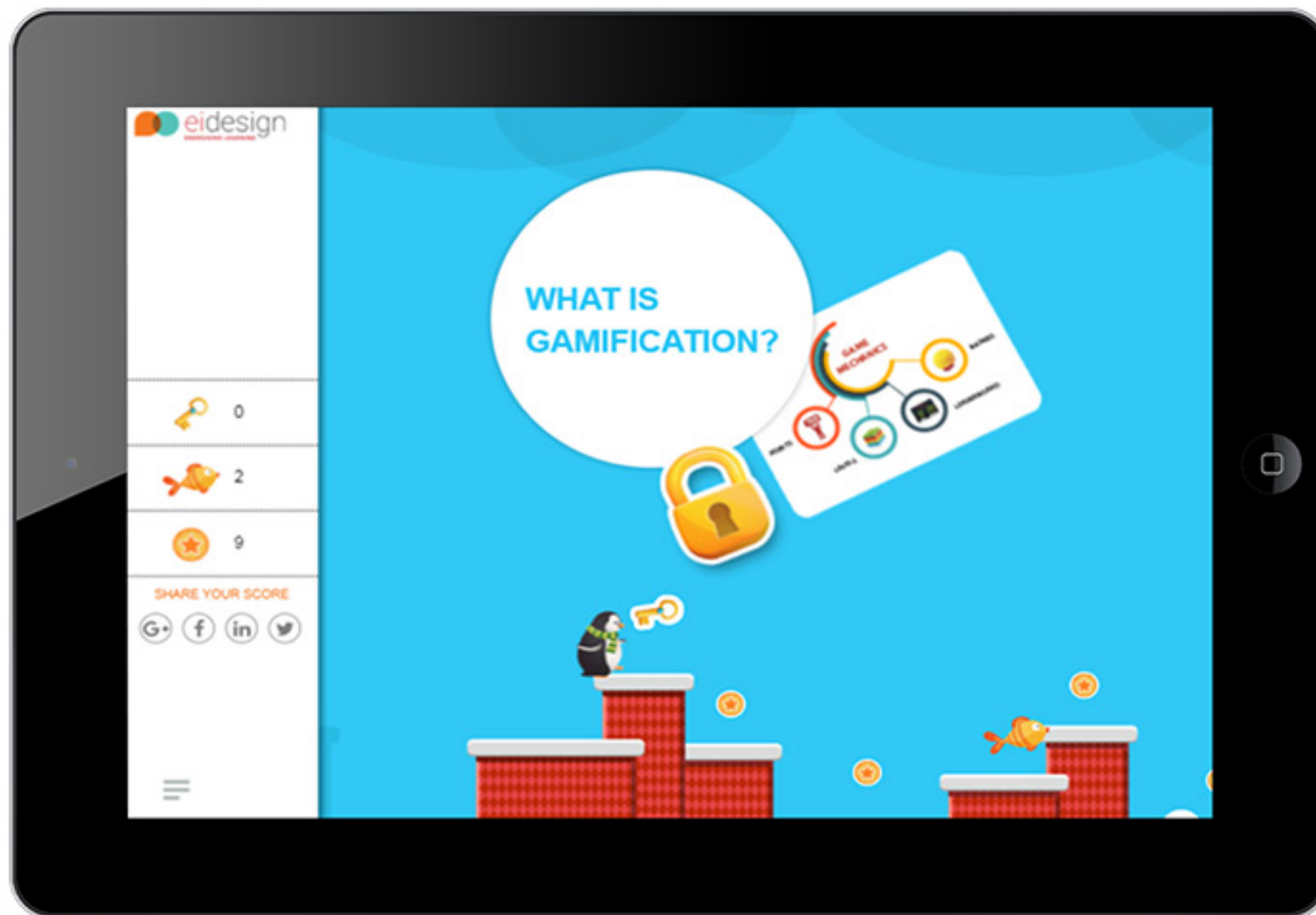


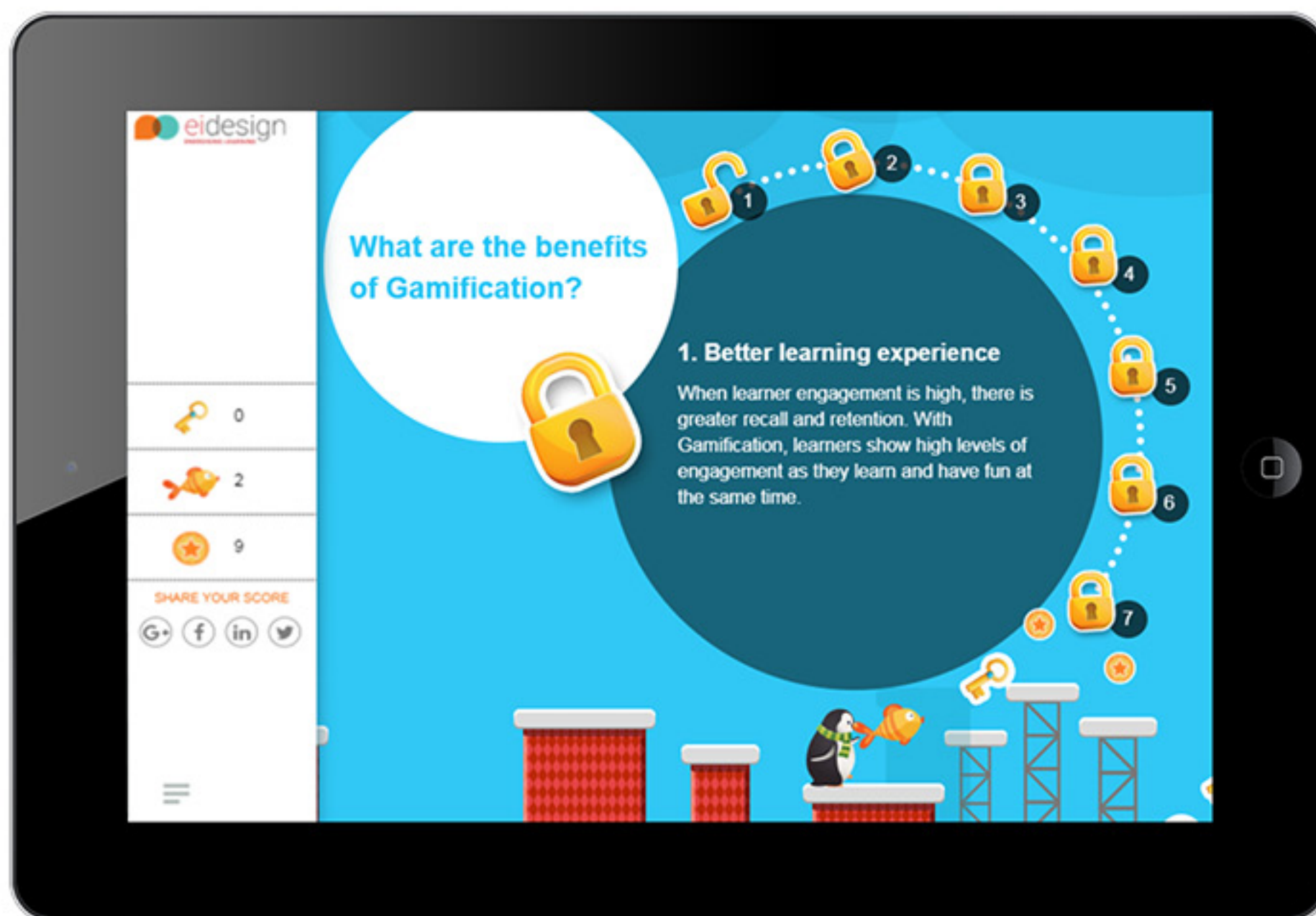


8. Infographics and Interactive Infographics

Infographics can be used to support formal training as learning summaries or ready reckoners. The next avatar, Interactive Infographics allow you to pack more content (in contrast to standard Infographics) and create higher engagement. You can use them as micro guides.

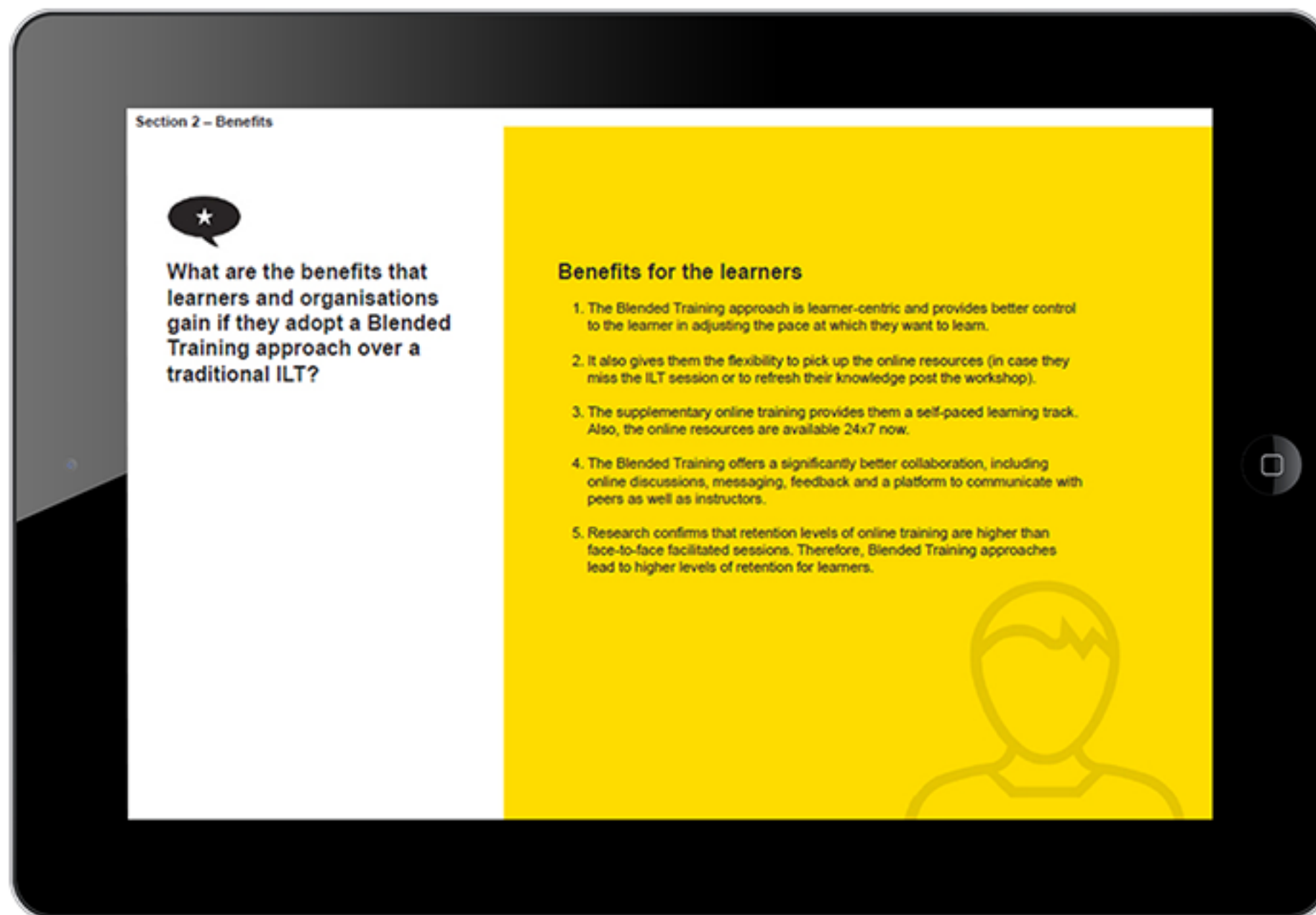


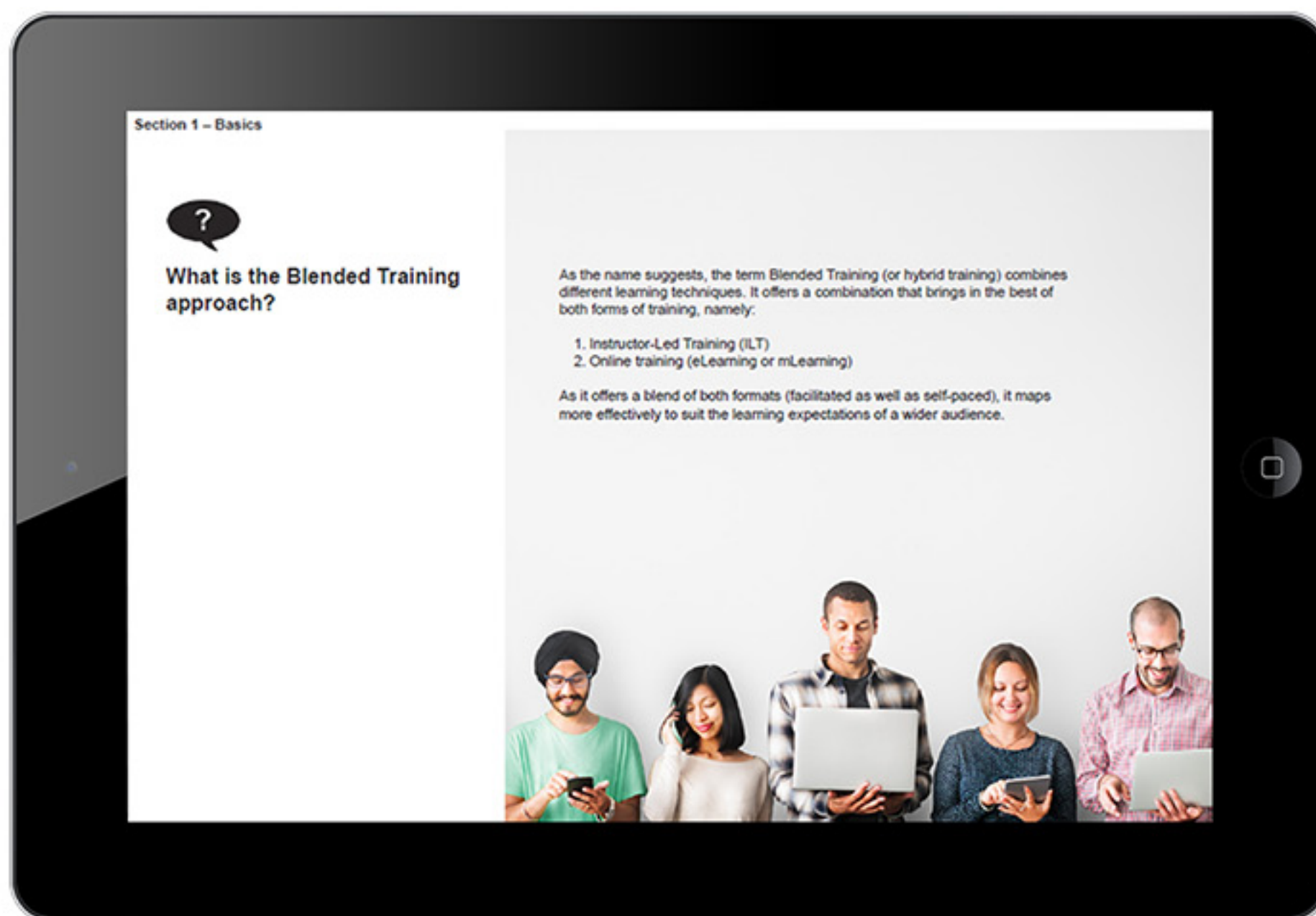




9. eBooks

These can prove to be useful PSTs, especially if you're looking to convert your documents into multi-device and HTML5 compatible resources. They provide the added benefit of converting lengthy documents into manageable chunks. You can also integrate audio and video to increase the impact.





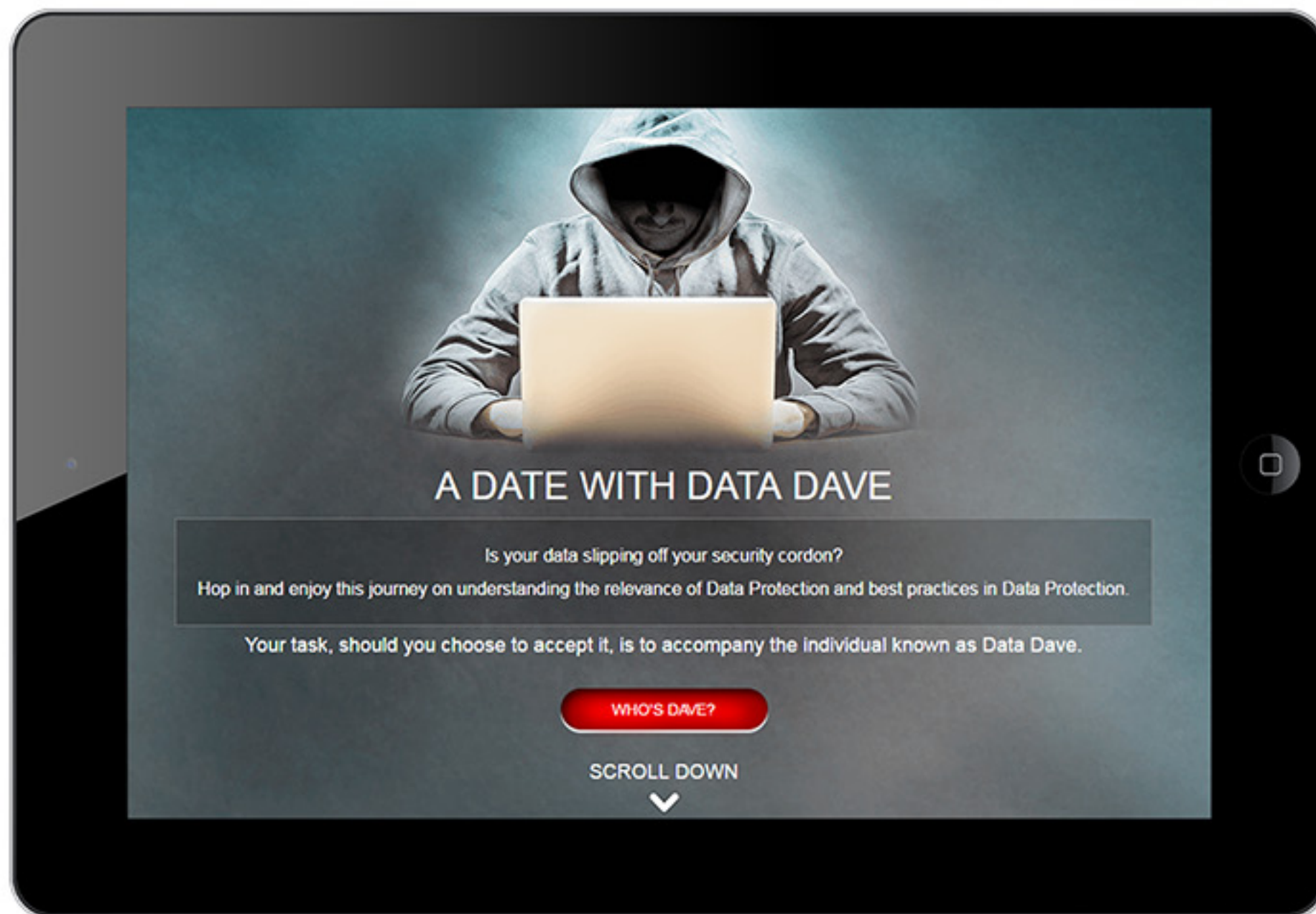
10. Expert Videos, Webinars/Recorded Webinar

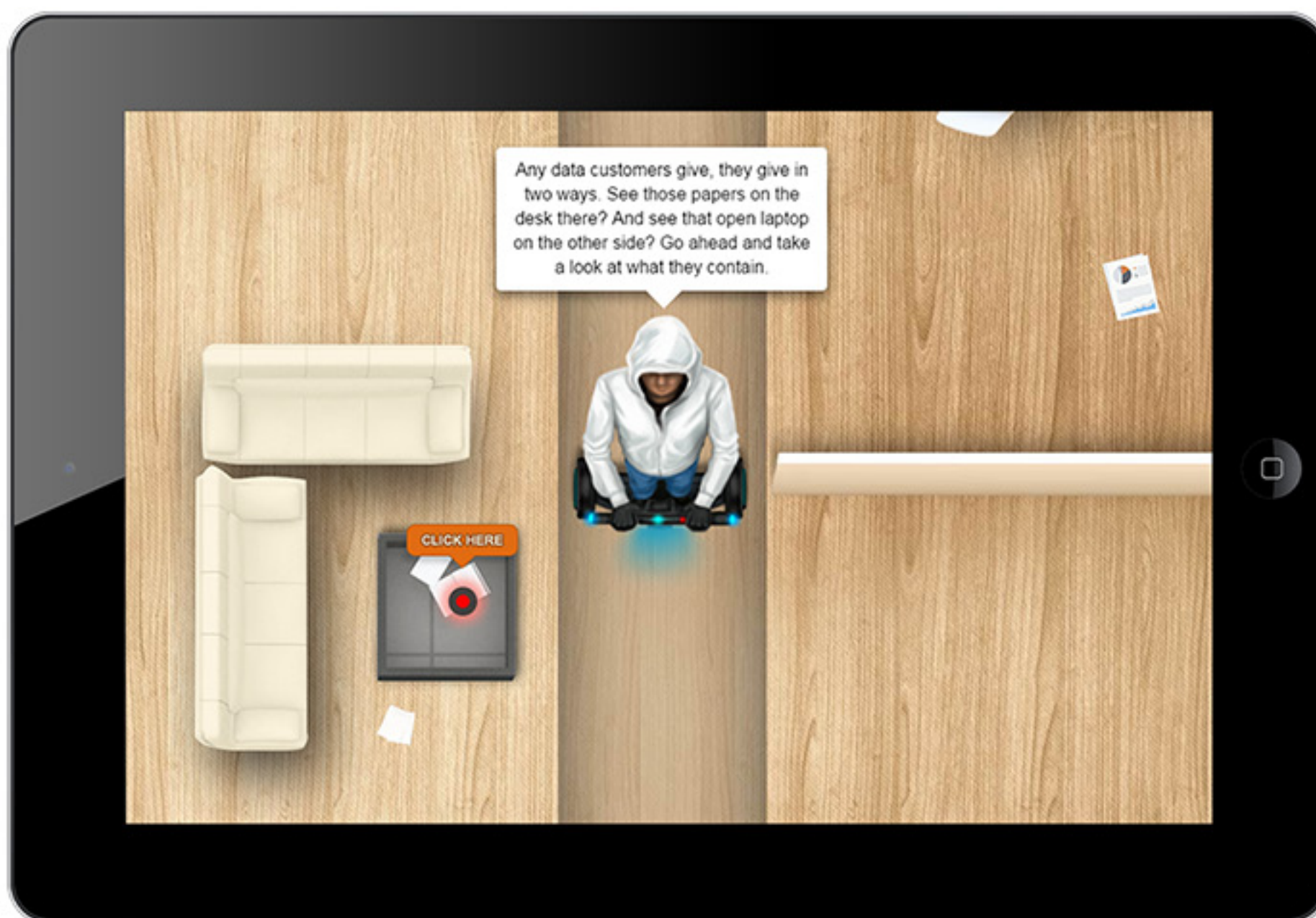
Expert insights are always treated by with respect by learners. Expert videos, webinars, and recorded webinars have plenty of takers in the learner community and they can serve as a useful PST.



12. Parallax based solutions

Using the parallax approach common in websites, this format provides a learning journey learners can “scroll” through. You can add a wide ranging interactions and assessments in the learning path.





What more is possible to engage your employees and boost employee performance?

To enhance employee performance and encourage on-the-job learning, Performance Support Tools can be used in conjunction with other learning strategies, such as:

1. mLearning or mobile learning (by offering PSTs in mobile-friendly formats).
2. Designing learning for the millennial generation (innovative formats of PSTs can be aligned to the way millennials learn).
3. Gamification.
4. Learning portals.





Read More

- [How Are Performance Support Tools Different From Training? 3 PST Examples Featuring Microlearning](#)
- [Performance Support Tools – Tips And Strategies To Boost Employee Performance](#)
- [What Is Performance Support And Why Should You Use Performance Support Tools?](#)
- [5 Innovative Examples To Boost Your Workforce Performance With Performance Support Tools \(PSTs\)](#)
- [Free eBook: Microlearning: How Can You Create Macro Impact With Micro Nuggets](#)

You can also watch this video to know about the different formats that can be used to offer Performance Support.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj5lovZxjz4>

Summary

I hope this eBook provides cues that will help you use Performance Support Tools or Learning aids to push learning application and create “learning as a continuum” in your organization. If you have any queries or need specific support, do contact me.

Planning to Integrate Performance Support Tools or Learning Aids In Your Learning Strategy? EI Design can help you with that and more!

EI Design's range of solutions includes approaches to:

- Spice up learning experiences (through **Microlearning, Social Learning, Gamification, and Personalized learning**)
- Create customized **learning portals** for specific initiatives in formal training, **performance support and Social Learning**
- Evoke a sense of learner contribution and participation (through Content Curation)
- Measure and enhance **learnability/learning effectiveness**
- Appeal to the **millennial generation**

We use the following strategies to create immersive learning:

- Creation of Learning and Performance Ecosystems
- Gamification
- Videos and Interactive Videos
- Apps for learning
- Decision-making and complex, branching simulations
- Scenario-based learning
- Storytorials

To summarize,

- We offer a comprehensive services portfolio that includes custom online (eLearning and mLearning) solutions and blended solutions.
- With a focus on performance gain, we offer a wide range of Performance Support Tools (just-in-time learning/job-aids).
- We also have a large localization practice covering over 26 global languages.





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